1: Herskovits E-4, 5 (1934) 1937 SV3 Haiti SV3
Mirebalais

443 eleven hundred and fifty sellers offer their wares in the course
443 of a single day. A careful tally is kept of these, since a fee for
651 the right of entry into the market is collected from all those who sell. Local tradespeople pay ten centimes each market day, but if they are sellers of meat they must pay five centimes a day for the right of entry, in addition to an annual license fee of 11.35 gourdes. A peddler of notions who goes about from one market center to another must, on coming to Mirebalais, either present a license costing 11.35 gourdes which grants the right to do business in any market of Haiti, or pay fifty centimes for permission to sell on any given market day. Other taxes collected for the upkeep of the market are particularly concerned with the transportation and sale of livestock. A fee of 3.50 gourdes is assessed when a cow is transported from one region to another or taken to the market for sale; one gourde must be paid the local tax-collector if a live animal is sold, the seller paying the tax; while if neither party to the sale knows how to write, a notary fee of two gourdes is assessed for drawing up a certificate of ownership. A fee of 3.25 gourdes is collected when a cow or bullock is butchered to be sold; for the slaughtering of a goat or pig, fees of two and one and a half gourdes, respectively, are collected.

443 A word must be said regarding the ubiquitous "small markets" that consist of a few women gathered at crossroads or at strategic points in towns on days when there is no large market, or wherever people gather. In Mirebalais such venders sit
[265] near the dispensary when it is open on Tuesdays. At cockfights and dances or at communal celebrations a small group of women is invariably found who sell drinks, bread, sweets, and other articles of food. At these "markets," too, such cooking aids as lard are sold, which both for these small markets and the larger ones is remelted and poured into little bottles selling for five centimes each. The returns from this petty trade are very small, yet in the aggregate they probably bulk at some figure that is not insignificant in the local economy.

1: Herskovits E-4, 5 (1934) 1937 SV3 Haiti SV3
Mirebalais

his fourth or fifth month, he is reprimanded for laziness if late in sitting up, and when he is taught to walk his parents call out: "Come, lazy one! Come on!" He receives no physical punishment, however, until somewhat older. Thus, for example, if after a child can crawl he is told not to go beyond the threshold, he is scolded the first two or three times he disobeys, but after this he is beaten with a small stick on the buttocks or thighs. Similar means are used to teach him at the same age not to go near the fire, to avoid the thorny cacti used to fence gardens, not to put things in his mouth, and — especially because of black magic — not to pick up anything from the ground. Training for bowel and bladder control is begun shortly after birth and is continued at every opportunity the mother may have to pick up the child, so that he is usually fairly well trained when a year old, though complete control is achieved only after two years or more. A child who wets his mat is beaten, but "not too hard."

Baptism takes place when all is in readiness for the ceremony, a matter of a month or two after birth, unless the child is seriously ill, in which case he is baptized immediately. The fee of 2.50 gourdes to the civil officer who registers the birth is paid by the father. The godfather pays a similar amount to the priest for baptizing the infant, and in adddition, if he desires and is able, he may both aid the godmother in meeting the expenses of dressing the child and give the mother a gift. The godmother furnishes the child with a shirt, a dress, a bonnet — "a pretty one" — stockings, shoes, and, if she can afford it, silk for a ribbon-trimmed coverlet. These gifts are obligatory, and even where a hasty baptism of a sick child has made it impossible to provide properly for his outfitting, if he survives, his mother is given a present of money by both godparents so she can procure this finery.

As in most Catholic countries, the godparents play an important role in the life of their godchild. Not only do they "stand in the place of father and mother" at his baptism, but

3: Leyburn Z-4, 5 (no date) 1966
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increasingly arid as its altitude decreases. Next to the Plaine du Nord, the best-watered part of Haiti is the southwestern peninsula, which projects far beyond the shelter of the mountains in the rest of the island.

When one subtracts from the 10,000 square miles all the sterile wastes of cactus, the salt marshes and brackish lakes, and the rock barrens, one realizes the inevitability of a low standard of living for the mass of the people. Other nations buy little from Haiti, local industries never reach even the proportions familiar to small-town Americans, and the total national budget is less than seven million dollars a year. Not even the élite are well-to-do by American small-town standards; it is only by comparison with the masses that they can be said to constitute a favored economic class. They rule the country, however, and what benefits accrue to Haiti rarely get beyond their pockets.

The resident of Haiti can never lose sight of the social distinctions between the two castes, for they permeate every phase of Haitian life. It has been so since the first hours of the republic. Indeed, the origins of the caste system lie in the French colonial days of the eighteenth century.

3: Leyburn Z-4, 5 (no date) 1966
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Taxes were heavy

175 651 652 and work strenuous; but there were a sound currency, commercial and agricultural prosperity, and a full treasury.

175 643 159 Like many a great man he was an overweening egotist. His energy and ambition, for Haiti as well as for himself, neither understood nor tolerated a lesser determination than his own. At times he seemed more intent upon the letter than upon the spirit of his laws. Probably his chief defect, a common failing of strong men, was a disregard for humble individual worth. To write of him invites the most colorful vocabulary. He is Black Majesty and the Emperor Jones. By almost any standards of leadership he would be accounted a great man. He lacked only those few final, subtle qualities which make for sheer genius. In 1820, stricken by paralysis and faced with defections in his army, he died as he had lived, dramatically, ending his life with a specially saved bullet (folklore says a silver one), in his palace of the ironic name, Sans Souci.

175 643 [641] In no significant respect did Christophe change the feudal structure of economic organization begun by Toussaint and carried on by Dessalines. It was in administration, especially as it affected social status, that the thirteen years of Christophe were important for the future of Haiti. Where the Emperor had been an unpredictable tyrant whose heavy hand inspired only terror, Christophe was a sternly just father whose well-disciplined children respected, admired, and even loved him.

175 427 475 655 566 643 The land policy of the two régimes was similar. Government estates were farmed out on five-year leases to the highest bidders among the well-to-do; large plantations belonging to the state were tilled by cultivators who might, without taking the term too harshly, be called serfs; loyal supporters and wealthy individuals were entrusted with responsibility. Like Dessalines, Christophe added wealth to power and rendered all his subjects dependent upon himself rather than on their own resources and influence—but all this with a difference.

175 643 642 565 Where the Emperor had denied the natural vanity of his aides by refusing them nobility, Christophe accepted their ambition as perfectly normal and made use of it for his own purposes. Four years after he had established his state, he changed it from a republic to a kingdom; all his important men he made dukes, barons, counts, knights. He warned them that he would expect them to live up to the dignities conferred upon them. Pomp and regalia are costly;

3: Leyburn Z-4, ! (no date) 1966
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therefore plantations must be made to yield the uttermost farthing if the nobleman was to pay for the necessities of strict court etiquette. It was by no means a childish whim which prompted Christophe to call himself a king; rather an intelligent utilization of the human material the leader had to work with. Vanity was to serve an economic and a political purpose.

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Christophe perceived that the defect of Dessalines' reign had been lack of security, both of person and property. Agriculture is a long-term investment and so must be hedged about by orderly rules. To this end the monarch stated his laws clearly, charged a fixed tax—one fourth of the annual crop—which would enrich the kingdom while allowing the tenant-proprietor a reasonable profit, and then guaranteed that no arbitrary demands would be made. Certainly there was no pampering of the wealthy, but there was ample prosperity resulting from regularity and security.

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The ordinary citizen was, as he had been, bound to the soil as an agricultural laborer. This quasi-serfdom, however, was comparative freedom. It simply meant that the home and work of a man must be at the plantation on which he had been born. Saturday afternoons and Sundays were free, so that the laborers might make the most of their opportunities to visit the nearest market village, to buy and sell small goods, gossip, and enjoy the sociability of being part of a crowd. Being bound to the soil meant simply that they could not move, when the impulse seized them, to another plantation or another part of the country. Those whose mothers or relatives were natives of a plantation must return to that estate, being forbidden to live in towns. No person, military or other, who did not derive his living from a plantation, could marry an agricultural worker—a prohibition designed to prevent workers from leaving estates because of family ties, and particularly to prevent women, as mothers of future cultivators, from deserting agriculture.

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Mediaeval serfdom itself went no further in binding people to the soil. Indeed, it did not go so far in regulating the daily life of serfs. Under Christophe the cultivators lived according to a routine as strict as that of a school. Reveille was rung as early as three o'clock to arouse women to prepare breakfasts for their menfolk; by four or four-thirty the bell was sounded for the commencement of work, which began after prayers had been led by the overseer. At nine o'clock there was a pause for luncheon, and then a resumption of

3: Leyburn Z-4, 5 (no date) 1966
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of one quarter of the crop was abolished.[23] This tax worked moderately well on great plantations with hundreds of workers and a large annual budget, but it bore heavily, sometimes unfairly, on smaller farms. To give up the government's fourth meant a tremendous drop in state revenues, but this was to be compensated by a new tax of ten *gourdes* (a gourde was then worth about five cents) on every thousand pounds of coffee sold in the country, and by an export tax on coffee. A man might raise sugar or make syrup, tafia (raw rum), and distilled rum, without paying any tax at all. Coffee culture required little careful cultivation, while sugar required a great deal; removing the tax from sugar would, it was hoped, encourage the cultivation of cane. The President was putting into practice the then novel idea of Adam Smith that the more freedom an enterpriser is allowed, the more he will produce, so that by pursuing his own self-interest he unintentionally benefits the state. To know definitely what taxes will be imposed, reasoned Pétion, is more of an inducement to a landlord than to face the double fluctuation of crop prices and the state's quarter. Small proprietors and sugar planters were now, like the larger landholders, attracted to Pétion's régime.

His final boon to proprietors, and one which Adam Smith would not have approved, was that of governmental subsidies in bad years. When prices of coffee and sugar were low, the state bought large quantities of these crops for the purpose of raising their price. The result was to increase the debt and to make the people feel that the state was responsible for individual economic success, rather than their own efforts.

These first concessions were all made to the important people of the South—to the mulattoes, families of the old régime, persons who desired economic prominence in order to bolster social position. The small folk of the Republic came next. The President recommended to the Senate the abolition of the law dating back to Toussaint's time which prohibited the holding of plantations of less than a minimum acreage. The Senate accordingly[24] reduced the minimum holding to thirty acres.[25] Actually this legislation did not bring

23. By a law of March 9, 1807. This tax was instituted by Toussaint and continued in effect by Dessalines and Christophe.

24. On April 21, 1807.

25. Or ten *carreaux*. Toussaint's law had allowed properties of fifty acres only in cases of exceptional fertility of land. See Note 18.

3: Leyburn Z-4, 5 (no date) 1966
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the still weak United States, France—the traditional enemy of Haitians, and moribund Spain, who was in fact shortly to lose most of her empire in the New World. Since he did not mean to drive his people to work, he resolved to exploit to the full the benefits of foreign trade in the hope that profits from exports would stimulate production. As for allies, he cultivated the friendship of the United States, but also sought to wean British merchants from the Northern ports. To this end, although he levied duties of twelve per cent on goods of other nations, he reduced duties on English goods to five per cent.[9]

Pétion, content to govern without an impressive court, gave the greatest encouragement possible to trade; he sheared expenses and managed to balance his budget. In 1818, for example, his revenues were $2,646,000 and his expenses $2,144,000, giving the republic a respectable surplus of $502,000.

Because Boyer was Pétion's disciple he followed in his predecessor's footsteps, thus fixing in his quarter-century administration the pattern of foreign trade under a tariff system. The Haitian élite seem never to have taken to commercial enterprise, nor has the country ever developed an economist even of fifth rank. Haitian thought, so eloquently articulate along political lines, has simply never turned its attention in any solid and serious way to economic problems. Nearly the whole of the foreign commerce of the republic from the earliest days was conducted by foreign merchants resident in Haiti. This was partly because the credit of the Haitians was not so generally established as to inspire confidence, but mostly it was due to lack of interest of the people in foreign trade.

In the eighteenth century Saint-Domingue had been almost the only colony producing such tropical products as sugar and coffee on a large scale; the absence of effective competition accounted for most of the prosperity of the French colony. In the nineteenth century, however, competition developed rapidly; and at this very time the laws and court decisions of Haiti began to hamper the business of the foreign merchants dealing there. By Article 21 of Boyer's Law of Patents, all persons engaging in any trade or profession except that of cultivation of the soil must be provided with a license or patent; all foreigners admitted as merchants into the republic must first secure the president's permission to acquire a patent; and when

9 See the Arrêté of October 15, 1814.

3: Leyburn Z-4, 5 (no date) 1966
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Justice in the courts was administered by Haitians whose narrow patriotism biased their decisions.

5. A temperamental tariff policy. Not only were imports subject to a tariff which might be changed at the whim of any president, but exports also were taxed. When an administration was in need of funds it might suddenly, without warning, raise the tax on coffee exports and so disrupt a merchant's business plans. The customs-houses were in charge of Haitians who steadily became more inefficient and grasping as the century progressed, until many foreign merchants felt that the only way of getting business dispatched was by means of bribes. Examinations at customs were long drawn out, often there was open thievery, and erroneous valuations were common.

6. The burden of the indemnity to France. Contracted by Boyer in 1825, this annual payment for sixty years was an incubus to every administration, leaving no surplus in the treasury for public works, education, or any internal development; likewise, it made the threat of foreign interference all the more imminent.

7. A debased currency. Pétion was the first president to devalue money, and his example was frequently followed thereafter. Counterfeiting was general. When a country's monetary system is unstable, its officials accustomed to bribery and graft,[17] and its financial structure almost nonexistent, there is little chance for sound economic development.

8. Dependence upon a single crop. Haitian economy was tied to the staple coffee, grown with indifferent care, prepared for the market in outmoded fashion, and sold in competition with coffee from more scientifically run plantations in other tropical countries.

9. Political instability. The recurrent revolutions in Haiti made foreigners chary of participating in the country's business, since the government which made a contract might be out of office before the ink was dry.

10. Indifference of the élite to economic pursuits. What profits were obtainable went into the pockets of foreign merchants, not those of Haitian businessmen. In 1842 the comparative exports of the

17. Sir Spenser St. John, always a bitter critic of Haiti, remarked (*Hayti, or The Black Republic*, p. 88) sardonically that "Boyer had the rare quality of being honest, and left in the treasury, on his departure, the sum of £200,000, the first and last chief who was ever guilty of so unaccountable a weakness."

3: Leyburn Z-4, 5 (no date) 1966
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Heads of State	*Color*	*Dates*	*Department*
21. Auguste	Light	1912–13	North
22. Oreste	Dark	1913–14	West
23. Zamor	Dark	1914	Artibonite
24. Théodore	Black	1914–15	North
25. Guillaume Sam	Black	1915	North
26. *Dartiguenave	Light	1915–22	South
27. *Borno	Light	1922–30	West
28. *Roy	Light	1930	West
29. *Vincent	Light	1930–41	West
30. *Lescot	Light	1941–	North

Summarizing this table, it can be seen that of the 31 heads of state only 13 have definitely belonged to the élite group. A few of the others might, by stretching the category, be regarded as members of this group. These 13, however, have governed for a total of 87 years, as compared with a rule of only 64 years by the representatives of the army clique. (It will be remembered that from 1807 to 1820 Haiti was separated and so had two heads of state.)

There have been 14 Negro rulers, 11 mulatto presidents, and 6 presidents who had at least a slight degree of white blood.

Of the 31, 13 represented the North (Christophe is included in this number, although he was born on the island of St. Christopher, from which he took his name); 8 came from the South; 7 from the West; 3 from the Artibonite; and none from the Northwest. The Northerners were in control of the government for 42 years; Southerners for 32 years; Westerners for 69 years; and the Artibonite presidents for less than 6 years.

CHAPTER XIV

1. *Taxation*

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The formative period of Haitian history, it is now evident, was between 1807 and 1820, when the young country was offered two sets of policies, generally opposed, to choose between: Pétion's and Christophe's. It is likewise clear that, since Pétion's required less discipline and self-restraint, and the country became reunited under Pétion's adoring secretary, Boyer, the easier path of Pétion was the one generally followed.

This choice is abundantly clear in the matter of taxation. Although the civil war between the two rulers was draining his treasury, Pétion either did not care or did not dare to tax his people. He relied rather upon heavy duties on trade in his ports, thus embarrassing commerce and taking away much of the profit from coffee. Christophe, on the other hand, without a scruple got millions by a tax on production amounting to one quarter of the annual crops of his kingdom;[4] consequently commerce in the North was free and that part of the island busy with prosperous trade. Christophe also taxed his nobles, charging a heavy fee for a patent of nobility, and also receiving annually a fourth of the crops raised upon their estates.

4. Copied from the practice of Toussaint and Dessalines.

3: Leyburn Z-4, 5 (no date) 1966
SV3 Haiti SV3

175 Boyer carried on Pétion's policy of no taxation. It was not until the American
● 651 Occupation that Haitians could be said to be taxed. Ninety per cent of the state's
[652] income between 1900 and 1915 regularly came from tariffs, and only ten per cent from internal taxes. Even the efforts of the Americans, resulting in the laws of 1924 and 1928, were on the whole restricted to a few excise taxes. A land tax was hopeless, due to the utter confusion of titles and the stubborn impassivity of peasant squatters.[5]

2. *Monetary Policy of Pétion and Boyer*

175 The monetary situation in Haiti was chaotic in its early days. The gold money
652 of France, Spain, England, and the United States circulated, as did small French coins, and the coins and paper money created by the Haitian rulers, who had complete control over money. For example, Pétion decreed[6] an increase in the value of the *gourde d'Espagne* from 8 livres 5 sols, to 9 livres; of the French écu of 6 francs from 9 livres to 9 livres 15 sols; and the 5 franc écu from 7 livres 10 sols to 8 livres 5 sols; this almost doubled the value of money in circulation. He also struck small coins to replace the pieces of 30, 24, 15, 12, and 6 sols of France. His small coins were merely token money.[7] The paper currency created by Pétion and so easily counterfeited has been mentioned.

[433] Boyer was continually in financial perplexities. Production was declining while expenditures had to be radically increased on account of the settlement with France in 1825. Boyer's budget was not a large one judged by modern standards, the average expenditure each year being about $5,000,000. To meet this, customs duties on imports and exports brought in about $2,200,000 annually; territorial duties on produce, houses, patents or licenses, market fees, and the like, a similar
[316] sum; but some half-million dollars had to be borrowed each year. The government
[425] hoped to get something from developing mines in the Spanish part of the island, but this hope failed. It was thought also that the sale of government lands might
[454] bring in some revenue, but few people wanted to invest money, when they had it, in land, with agricultural affairs developing as they were and no way of making
[465] people work: investment in trade was more promising. The national treasury was so empty that both the civil and military officials were poorly paid. It was fre-
[661] quently said that almost all administrators and persons in authority were open to bribery. Meantime the number of civil servants was increasing: there was a swarm
[647] of hirelings and subalterns in every commune, like a host of vampires. By their lack of honesty, conscientiousness, and efficiency, immense sums were lost annually to the treasury.

5. See the *Report of the American High Commissioner* (1929), p. 19.

6. May 4, 1808.

7. *Pétion voyant s'échapper de ses États les gourdes qu'effrayaient ses démêlés avec Christophe, eut pour les retenir l'ingénieuse idée d'y pratiquer une troude. Ce moyen était trop efficace pour ne pas réussir, et il était trop simple pour que l'emploi n'en fut pas généralisé au moins par un équivalent. Ainsi, lorsqu'il en vint à battre monnaie, le chef de l'état du Sud descendit le titre de sa gourde à peu près au titre de la gourde espagnole tarée par son emporte-pièce. Il lui donne 858 millièmes de fin.*" Lepelletier de Saint-Remy, *Saint-Domingue*, II, 194.